



**SMALL LOANS, BIG DREAMS:
How Nobel Prize Winner Muhammad Yunus and Microfinance are
Changing the World**

Alex Counts

**Wednesday, October 8, 2008
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**Treasury Executive Institute
801 9th Street NW
Washington, DC**

The stark reality of global poverty – the poorest half of the world's population owns less than one percent of its assets, and that nearly one billion people subsist on less than \$1 per day – rarely registers even a ripple in the international media. Western attempts to stem hunger and poverty are often piecemeal and ineffective, applying band-aids rather than finding permanent solutions. But Muhammad Yunus, visionary founder of the Grameen Bank, has demonstrated different and more inclusive ways of approaching the problems that confront humanity. Instead of seeking out wealthy people with collateral and excluding the poor, Yunus has sought out the impoverished and excluded the rich. His approach, known as microfinance, has revolutionized global antipoverty efforts and earned him a Nobel Peace Prize.

In *Small Loans, Big Dreams*, author Alex Counts looks at the lives of micro-lending borrowers from the Grameen Foundation in Bangladesh and Chicago. All of the borrowers profiled are women of little-to-no means, each struggling to gain financial independence. In Bangladesh, these women face off against very poor living conditions and prejudice of men. In Chicago, they must overcome crime and other hurdles that come with life in the inner city. Straightforward and accessible, Counts reveals how Muhammad Yunus and his concept of micro-financing has helped those living in poverty achieve real financial independence.

Alex Counts is President and CEO of Grameen Foundation, which he founded in 1997 with the help of Muhammad Yunus. He graduated from Cornell University with a degree in Economics, and was a Fulbright Scholar in Bangladesh, where he spent many years working in microfinance and poverty reduction.

REGISTRATION: All SES members, candidates, and GS-15s in Treasury and legacy Treasury bureaus are eligible to attend. Please register by October 1, 2008, on line at <http://intranet.treas.gov/tei/>. DHS and legacy bureau employees should call 202-622-9311 for registration assistance.